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Letter dated 16 October 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 16 October 1998, addressed to you by His Excellency, Mr. Aytuğ Plümer, representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 62, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Volkan VURAL
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Letter dated 16 October 1998 from Mr. Aytuğ Plümer, addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to refer to the letters dated 16 September and 2 October 1998 addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative at the United Nations (A/53/399-S/1998/864 and A/53/460-S/1998/917, respectively) which contain allegations regarding cultural property in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

Previous allegations regarding the so-called "plundering of the religious and cultural identity" of Northern Cyprus have been amply dealt with in our previous communications addressed to you, most recently in my letter dated 24 July 1998 (A/52/997-S/1998/697). Such unfounded Greek Cypriot charges are aimed at covering up the fact that it has been the Greek Cypriot side that has systematically tried to eradicate the Turkish Muslim heritage of Cyprus, in particular during the ethnic cleansing campaign directed against the Turkish Cypriot people between 1963 and 1974. There is ample graphic evidence of the deliberate destruction by Greek Cypriots, with the support of Greece, of historical and religious monuments in Cyprus during this period. I am enclosing herewith a list of the 103 mosques and Muslim shrines that had been the target of such actions until Turkey's legitimate intervention in Cyprus on 20 July 1974, in the wake of a coup d'état carried out by Greece and its collaborators in Cyprus with the aim of annexing the island (see appendix). The long list of devastated mosques and other places of worship testify to the extent and volume of the crimes perpetrated against the Islamic character of the island and the massive campaign of ethnic cleansing directed against the Turkish Cypriot people.

Despite the Greek Cypriot representative's rhetoric to the effect that the Greek Cypriot administration "zealously protects all places of worship belonging to all faiths in Cyprus" and the lip-service paid to the improvement of "existing international conventions for the protection of the world cultural properties", the Greek Cypriot side continues, on the one hand, to show utter contempt for what is left of the Turkish Islamic heritage in South Cyprus where Ottoman Turkish shrines are under threat of disintegration owing to total neglect and, on the other hand, systematically blocks any external financial or technical assistance to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus for conservation purposes.

The policy of the Government of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is to protect the cultural heritage of Northern Cyprus irrespective of its religious and cultural origins. The Department of Antiquities of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the competent authority charged with protecting and preserving cultural sites in the Republic, has to realize its objectives with limited internal resources owing to the inhuman and illegal blockage of any international assistance to the Turkish Cypriot side by the Greek Cypriot administration. Within this context, I wish to emphasize that preservation of cultural and historical sites through reuse is carried out in accordance with international instruments governing the preservation of cultural heritage.

In view of the foregoing, it is clear that the allegations of the Greek Cypriot side on the subject of cultural heritage have no basis and are utterly unjustified. With these allegations, the Greek Cypriot side attempts to portray Cyprus as a Hellenic island with an exclusively Christian Orthodox background, in spite of the reality that Turkish Cypriots are sovereign equals and that the island has a rich Turkish Islamic heritage owing to centuries-long Turkish rule. Such efforts on the part of the Greek Cypriot side demonstrate that it is far from ready to acknowledge the existing realities on the island with a view to arriving at a partnership settlement based on sovereign equality.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its appendix would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 62, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Aytuğ PLÜMER
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

APPENDIX

List of mosques and Muslim shrines destroyed or damaged by Greek Cypriots until 20 July 1974

1. Omerge Mosque
2. Bayraktar Mosque
3. Tahtakala Mosque
4. Araplar Mosque
5. Dükkanlar Önü Mosque
6. Zeytinlik Mosque
7. Aşaği Deftera Mosque
8. Aşaği Lákadamya Mosque
9. Türkeli Mosque
10. Küçük Kaymakli Mosque
11. Yilmazköy Mosque
12. Derelikôy Mosque
13. Erenköy Mosque
14. Gaziler Mosque
15. Dereli Mosque
16. Demirhan Mosque
17. Minarelikôy Mosque
18. Matyat Mosque
19. Madenlikôy Mosque
20. Katalyonda Mosque
21. Somolof Mosque
22. Akaca Mosque
23. Güzelyurt Mosque
24. Orunda Mosque
25. Peristerona Mosque
26. Denya Mosque
27. Kurtboğan Mosque
28. Bozdağ Mosque
29. Flâsu Mosque
30. Mansur Mosque
31. Dali Mosque
32. Solya Mosque

33. Eylence Mosque
34. Balikesir Mosque
35. Arpalik Mosque
36. Aybifan Mosque
37. Mamundali Mosque
38. Ceyhan Mosque
39. Yuvali Mosque
40. Ovalik Mosque
41. Çatalköy Mosque
42. Beşparmak Mosque
43. Lapta Mosque
44. Kömürcü Mosque
45. Karşiyaka Mosque
46. Tepebaşi Mosque
47. Şirinevler Mosque
48. Hz. Ömer Shrine Mosque
49. Girne Mosque
50. Aga Cafer Pasha Mosque
51. Acemzade Mecidi Mosque
52. Zahuri Mosque
53. Koraku Mosque
54. Aredyu Mosque
55. Gürpinar Mosque
56. Linu Mosque
57. Yağmuralan Mosque
58. Süleymaniye Mosque
59. Selçuklu Mosque
60. Kuzucuk Mosque
61. Çayirova Mosque
62. Mutluyaka Mosque
63. Paşaköy Mosque
64. Alaniçi (Magosa) Mosque
65. Geçitkale (Magosa) Mosque
66. Adaçay Mosque
67. Boğaztepe Mosque
68. Pinarli Mosque
69. Atlilar Mosque

70. Bahçalar (Yeni İskele) Mosque
71. Yedikonuk Mosque
72. Elmali Mosque
73. Taşlica Mosque
74. Ceylân Mosque
75. Alsandik Mosque
76. Yerovasi Mosque
77. Bağlarbaşi Mosque
78. Silifke Mosque
79. Çeliktaş (Limasol) Mosque
80. Baf Mosque
81. Eledyu Mosque
82. Amarget Mosque
83. Aktepe Mosque
84. Akkargi Mosque
85. Poli Mosque
86. Hulu Mosque
87. Girittera Mosque
88. Olukönü Mosque
89. Çinarli Mosque
90. Aşaği Baf Mosque
91. Haci Mehmet Tekke Mosque
92. Turabi Mosque and Shrine
93. Düzova (Lárnaka) Mosque
94. Akkor Mosque
95. Aksu Mosque
96. Maroni Mosque
97. Kalavason Mosque
98. Lefkara Mosque
99. Çamlibel (Lárnaka) Mosque
100. Akhisar Mosque
101. Ummu Haram Mosque
102. Aplenda Mosque
103. Alâ-tirke Mosque

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